REPORT REPRINT

MinIO partners with VMware to bring cloud-native object storage to VCF with Tanzu customers

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Software-defined object storage vendor MinIO supports cloud-native applications, including those running on Kubernetes. Now the vendor has unveiled a new partnership with VMware to provide object storage to customers using VMware Cloud Foundation with Tanzu.

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Introduction

MinIO specializes in open source high-performance and highly scalable software-defined and cloud-native object storage. The company has continued to refine its software by adding enterprise-grade features such as object locking and key encryption as well as quality-of-life features such as a new management UI. Now MinIO has partnered with VMware to integrate MinIO object storage into the latest Tanzu release, which the vendor hopes will open up significant new go-to-market opportunities.

451 TAKE

MinIO is not the only open source object storage software on the market, but where the vendor differentiates is its focus on performance and supporting cloud-native applications. Object storage, especially in the cloud, is often associated with the notion of being 'cheap and deep.' However, while MinIO has made its platform easily consumable like competing cloud object stores, the vendor has prioritized making the platform performant, enterprise ready and not just for read-only use cases. Additionally, by partnering with VMware the vendor is boosting its visibility to a large and well-established customer base. MinIO's object storage also complements VMware's existing storage options for Tanzu, which includes block and file via vSAN and a CSI driver for use with Kubernetes storage classes. MinIO is also integrated with Velero, the open source container data protection tool that VMware supports and leverages within the Tanzu platform. With its synergy with VMware, MinIO stands to gain significant exposure to new accounts. However, the vendor will have to ensure that new users and a higher profile translate into growth of MinIO Enterprise subscriptions.

Details

MinIO is a relative youngster compared with the other object storage products on the market, but it wears this badge with pride by denoting that its platform has been built within the past five years to serve stateful applications. In terms of traction, the company claims that its software receives 540,000 Docker pulls per day (on average) and is now in use by 58% of the Fortune 500. However, users do not necessarily equate to paying customers and converting users is a perennial challenge for any open source company. For large enterprises, any meaningful usage for production workloads can quickly result in the desire to receive full-time paid support and MinIO's increasing traction with larger organizations is encouraging. In our Voice of the Enterprise: DevOps H2 2019 study, we gauged customer attitudes toward open source software and 36% of respondents had a preference for open source software and 38% take an exploratory approach. Especially in the context of cloud-native, there is growing reliance on open source tools that work well in the Kubernetes ecosystem.

MinIO offers an open source and hardware-agnostic object platform that can run on any heterogenous combination of commodity hardware, but it also provides reference architectures for NVMe and disk-based appliances from multiple major system providers such as Cisco, Dell EMC, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and Lenovo. The software itself can run in containers and has been largely API driven via an S3 compliant API, although one recent update includes the addition of a management UI for users that don't want to take the API approach. The vendor also added a key encryption service and object-locking capabilities to enhance security in the face of threats such as ransomware. MinIO also added cross-site active-active replication. Its subscription pricing uses capacity-based monthly billing to be as cloud-like in its consumption as possible.

As VMware strengthens its embrace of Kubernetes it is integrating Tanzu across its portfolio. VMware now offers two flavors; vSphere with Tanzu and VMware Cloud Foundation (VCF) with Tanzu. As a part of VCF with Tanzu, VMware has introduced the vSAN Data Persistence Platform to support modern stateful applications and maximize performance. The partnership between MinIO and VMware means that customers can use a MinIO dashboard and launch the software directly inside vCenter. Although MinIO is not the only 'day one' partner for the Data Persistence Platform, it does share the same emphasis on performance and cloud-native app support that VMware has. While this launch is new, the ties are not; MinIO previously worked with Pivotal Labs prior to the acquisition by VMware and already had a MinIO operator available for use with vSphere.